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**POC:** Kathleen Roberts  
Office: 202.781.4123  
[kathleen.roberts@navy.mil](mailto:kathleen.roberts@navy.mil)  
Fax: 202.781.4713

### **Keel Laid for Future USNS Washington Chambers**

WASHINGTON -- The keel for the future USNS Washington Chambers (T-AKE 11) was laid during a ceremony at the General Dynamics-NASSCO shipyard in San Diego Aug. 25. Barbara Whaley, a production group manager with the Naval Sea Systems Command's Supervisor of Shipbuilding, Conversion and Repair, confirmed the keel was laid "straight and true."

As a Combat Logistics Force ship operated by the Military Sealift Command, the future USNS Washington Chambers will help the Navy maintain a forward presence worldwide by delivering ammunition, food, fuel and other dry cargo to U.S. and allied ships at sea. The ship is designed to operate independently for extended periods at sea and can carry and support two helicopters. USNS Washington Chambers is the 11th ship of the Lewis and Clark-class.

Continuing the tradition of honoring legendary pioneers and explorers, the Navy's newest underway replenishment ship recognizes Capt. Washington Irving Chambers, a pioneer in naval aviation history. Among his many accomplishments, Chambers arranged for the world's first take-off and landing of an airplane on a warship – confirming the potential of carrier-based naval aviation operations. T-AKE 11 will be the first Navy ship to honor Chambers.

The T-AKE program has contract options for up to 14 ships, and 12 ships are currently fully under contract. To date, seven ships of the Lewis and Clark class have been delivered. The shipbuilder is delivering ships approximately 1 to 2 months early, with future ships delivering even earlier as the program compresses the overall build cycle.

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